

An interest in using the toilet will naturally develop in children. It can be encouraged by joyfully reading about toileting and by observing parents and older children using the toilet. Children want to fit in and will use the toilet sooner or later, it is important not to force or pressure a child about toileting. Rushing the process only creates complications and will lengthen the amount of time it takes for a child to become "toilet trained."

There are important factors we consider when determining if a child is ready to begin toilet learning:

1. Physical readiness: the ability to control the muscles necessary to hold her/his bladder and bowel movements. (begins around two years old)
2. Cognitive readiness: an awareness of what is expected of him/her.
3. Emotional readiness: the ability to hold her/his urge until he/she reaches a toilet and undresses. This is a letting go process - very young children perceive what comes from their bodies as still a part of them and sometimes have difficulty letting go of their urine and feces.

Once a child shows an interest in using the toilet we begin observing that child carefully. We take note of when the child needs to go, look out for body language and any clue he/she gives that she/he has the urge and we then offer encouragement. For example:

If we see a child squatting, we may say,
"It looks like you may have to go to the bathroom. Do you want to sit on a potty chair?"

When you are in the bathroom you can tell your child,
"This is the place where Mommy and/or Daddy go to the bathroom (or whatever term your family uses). You can either go here or use your potty chair when you need to."

Children at this age learn best through imitation.

The potty chair should always be available if the child wishes to use it. It is normal for a child to sit on the potty chair and "practice" for many months before they actually use it.

Encouragement when a child shows interest is important. Never force the child. Pressure will create greater resistance. Often, children who sense a parent's anxiety about toileting will begin a power struggle. This is a battle an adult will never win because we can't "make" a child use the toilet.

If your child resists using the potty chair when you offer, you can say, "Whenever you are ready, the potty chair is here for you."

Once your child has been going often on the potty you may also offer the choice of wearing diapers or underpants, but remember, accidents are part of the process. Accidents can happen for a long time and best practice is to **allow underpants and two accidents and then suggest a diaper. If the child resists a diaper then suggest a pull-up.**

If you plan on trying underpants at school, please send LOTS of extra clothes - enough for 3 full changes - please also send diapers and pull-ups for teachers to use after the under pant "trying." We will put children who are learning in a diaper or pull-up during rest time.

It's not uncommon for a child to begin toilet learning and abruptly stop and regress to diapers. Keep up with the same no pressure process and be patient.

Do not use a reward system!

Toilet learning is a process that takes time and works best when there is mutual respect and trust between child and parent. Pushing or manipulating your child by giving treats or some other special reward for something they will learn on their own is inappropriate...trust toilet learning will happen when the child is ready.

Studies show only 4% of children in the U.S. are fully toilet-trained by the age of two, 60% by the age of three and 88% by three and a half. By age four 98% are fully trained.

Be careful not to feel pressure from family, friends and sometimes physicians, to train your child too soon. The emotional consequences are too great.

Our teachers will work with parents to bring toilet learning to children in a positive and encouraging way. In the infant/toddler room toileting is a social event as some children are being diapered while others are sitting on the toilet, while others are watching. Self-care, as with many other skills, is learned through watching not necessarily by listening to someone explain how to do something.

Toileting is not forced upon the child at ACN but instead managed with input from both the parent and teacher. Children in our care shall never be forced in any way to use the bathroom if they do not wish to do so. Negative reinforcement or negative comments about toileting accidents are not permitted in our facility by either teachers or parents.

If a child has an accident at school, the attending caregiver helps the child to clean themselves and finds clean clothing for the child to wear.

It is important for the child to be developmentally ready for toilet learning. By the time the children move into the Pre-k, toileting becomes more of a private time particularly when the skill is mastered. However, many children need supervision and teachers will need to know your child well to provide just the right care.

Children do need to be well on their way with toileting before they can graduate to the Preschool.

Our preschool does not have a bathroom inside the classroom and, at times, only has one teacher which is why you may see Preschoolers use the bathrooms in the hallway as a group.

We exceed state requirements by cleaning our bathrooms daily and encourage good hygiene and care for our bathrooms while working with children. We require all children to wash hands after using the bathroom - even if the attempt was not successful. It would be most helpful for parents to implement this practice at home as well.

Together, we can joyfully help our children develop the skills they need to feel successful in the bathroom.